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ABSTRACT

Educational issues need reexamining, according to this author, to find the proper role for education in a new international economic order (NIEO). In the first part of this essay, the author questions older theories of education and development--which saw education as furthering national development by supplying trained manpower--and discusses current economic trends, the limits to growth, education's role in reducing or perpetuating inequality within nations, and the usefulness of international organizations in providing data, research, and theory on education and the NIEO. In the second session, the author notes the expansion of education in all countries, the lack of comparable economic growth, the decline of the idea that education is a prime factor in development, and the growing impression that education helps create unemployment or fosters loss of cultural identity. The author counters this impression by suggesting that education has multiple effects and should be seen as a subsystem within a larger socioeconomic environment. (Author/RW)

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EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

Michel Debeauvais

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CONTENTS

		Page
Section I	Education in a new international economic order	7
	Introduction	7
	Discussion of the NIEO cannot be restricted to negotiations between governments	9
	I. Extrapolation from current trends leads to dead-end	11
	II. Education and endogenous development	12
	III. A priority task for international organizations: comparison of national experiences	13
Section II	Education and national development	16

SECTION I. EDUCATION IN A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

INTRODUCTION

In none of the documents adopted by the United Nations on a New International Economic Order (including the Charter of the Rights and Duties of States) do we find any reference to education; it will be noted that the word "social" is missing also, whereas for the last 20 years United Nations vocabulary has customarily linked "social" aspects with "economic" ones, in order to stress the complementary character and the interdependence of these two dimensions of development.

From this observation we may draw two very different conclusions: on the one hand, we may take the view that the texts relating to the NIEO state the principal aims of a strategy for the United Nations community, leaving it up to each institution within the United Nations family to give flesh to these aims and to draw the appropriate consequences as to alterations in its specific programmes; it is surely with this attitude that UNITAR has taken the initiative of organizing the present conference, and that Unesco has adopted as its central theme for its Medium-Term Plan for 1977-1983 the contribution that each of the Organization's activities (educational, scientific, cultural and in the sphere of communications) can make to the establishment of a NIEO[1]. One could quote other examples within the United Nations family or outside[2]. It is within this framework that I shall be making my contribution to this conference.

But I feel I should begin by taking a look at an alternative interpretation, a more restrictive one, which regards any attempt to introduce new themes in connexion with the NIEO as a threat, calling all the texts adopted quasi-unanimously by the United Nations in 1974 into question. This opposition has been expressed by a number of governments whose attachement to the establishment

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1. The principal documents in this connexion are the Medium-Term Plan adopted by Unesco at its General Conference held in Nairobi, and the book published by Unesco on the NIEO: "Moving towards Change". Also, a working document presented at this Conference ("Fostering Solidarity between Asia and Africa") presents the different ways in which Unesco is contributing to the establishment of an NIEO.
2. In addition to the numerous meetings of experts on different aspects of the NIEO held over the past four years, mention may also be made of the meetings and publications of the Third World Forum and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

of an NIEO is strongest, on the occasion of recent international discussion on the "strategy of essential needs" originally proposed by the World Conference on Employment organized by the International Labour Office in 1975, and subsequently taken up, although from a rather different standpoint, by the World Bank.

I am not concerned here to discuss in detail the arguments advanced in support of either interpretation. I shall confine myself instead to observing that discussion on the NIEO has been directed at two distinct levels: that of ideas and theories on development strategies; and that of international diplomacy, in which government representatives state their views, and in which ideas become caught up in the balance of power between countries.

So there are two possible "readings" of the NIEO: according to the first of these, the ideas that led to recognition of the necessity of a new international economic order are a stimulant to reflection on the ways, the means and the goals of an alternative development strategy, different from the one gradually worked out and adopted during the first and second development decades; according to the second view, ideas are arguments capable of being used in support of positions or governments, and of the interests which these represent in international bodies.

There is obviously plenty of overlap between the sphere of ideas and that of international diplomacy; but the distinction I have tried to introduce may help to clarify discussion of the scope and limitations of the NIEO.

There is also a third series of questions appropriate for discussion in a meeting organized by UNITAR: the nature and scope of the contribution that the United Nations could make to the establishment of a NIEO. This contribution too could be discussed on two levels, in line with the distinction drawn above:

(a) that of international relations between governments; such is the case with the United Nations General Assembly and the big international conferences such as those held by UNCTAD or UNIDO;

(b) secondly, that of the technical activities of the United Nations Institutions, within which themes relating to both national and international social and economic development are discussed. Such work and such meetings are concerned with discussion of ideas, although they are also influenced, directly or indirectly, by intergovernmental relations.

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DISCUSSION OF THE NIEO CANNOT BE RESTRICTED TO NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS

I shall therefore begin by postulating that it is of the utmost importance to keep open (by means of meetings such as this, in particular) the international discussion of ideas on what "another development" might be[1] and on the conditions in which a NIEO could be established, even though talks between governments on this last point appear to have reached stalemate at the present time: objective necessity commands that they resume one day. It would be illusory, doubtless, to imagine that discussion of ideas alone could alter the international situation or even exert direct influence on governmental positions or the decisions of the United Nations. But it is reasonable to assume that the transition to a New World Order is going to be a lengthy process, the groundwork for which needs to be prepared by constant confrontation of theoretical conceptions of development, and by a considerable additional support for investigations and research into social and economic problems.

The first question to ask in discussing education's rôle in a NIEO is a prerequisite to further discussion: is it not artificial to postulate a relation between the structure of international economic relations and a social sub-system as closely bound up with national characteristics specific to each country as the education system? The assertion of the link between social factors and the economy has clearly been a great step forward in the evolution of ideas over the last thirty years, and the work of the United Nations has played a big part in stressing the interdependence of these two dimensions of development. By this token, one is tempted to suggest that the natural counterpart of a NIEO ought to be a New International Social Order[2]. But there are also reasons for questioning the grounds for such an assertion, which is derived from a series of intermediate arguments, such as: the international economic order is the complement of national economic development policies; national economic development is the complement of social development, and of educational development especially; national education policies are the complement of an international social order[3]. Surely this juxtaposition of concepts runs the risk of culminating in a purely verbal construction? And even were we to admit the desirability of interdependence between the different areas of development, would this in itself suffice to explain the real world? A good many other ideas on development which had evolved gradually since the 1950s and had achieved practically universal acceptance, are now coming under attack. The current of thought that seeks to abolish the existing international economic order and replace it by a new order naturally calls for a re-examination of the relations between economic and social factors, and especially between education and the economy.

We are currently witnessing a reaction against the notions that used to lie at the root of the theory of integrated economic and social development, and of the "human resources planning" practices associated with it. Two ideas underpinned these conceptions: education is a factor of economic development, and this depends on manpower skills, which are developed by the education system. Two consequences flowed from this: the need to augment the proportion of resources

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1. Borrowing from the title of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation report: "What Now: Another Development".
2. The International Institute for Social Studies (ILO) held an international Symposium on "The Social Implications of a NIEO", in 1975.
3. Some people have already suggested an "International Educational Order".

devoted to education (considered as an investment), and the need to determine - in the light of output targets - skilled manpower requirements in terms of the different degrees and types of training required, so as to integrate educational planning with economic planning.

As we know, these relations attracted criticism, in the 1970s, under pressure from facts: after having expanded to a degree unprecedented for two decades, educational spending seems to have reached a ceiling in almost all countries, while there seems to be no evidence that those countries which have made the greatest efforts in favour of education have enjoyed higher economic growth rates; further, the chief problem facing employment policy is the limited capacity of the modern sector of the economy to absorb labour, and no longer a shortage of skilled personnel. Presumably this does not mean that there is no link between education and the economy, merely that these interrelations are far more complex than the "technical coefficients" by which skilled manpower forecasting methods sought to express them. What is more, while we now acknowledge the limitations of these attempts at forecasting and past errors, this does not necessarily imply that we ought to prefer the two theories opposed to the human resources planning approach, namely macro-economic measurement of the rôle of education in economic growth[1], and above all that of "human capital"[2], which sought to determine educational policy priorities on the basis of rates of return derived from cost-benefit analysis. The problems that arose in the course of the 1970s.

The following proposition may therefore be advanced: rather than postulate a perfect match between the social order and the economic order, let us rather subject educational questions to critical re-examination, as is now being done with economic development strategies.

In this sense, I shall select three themes from the NIEO in order to examine limitations upon their applicability to educational issues:

(a) the continuation of trends of the past two decades leads us to unacceptable situations;

(b) the international economic order is founded on unfair mechanisms which perpetuate inequality;

(c) the bodies making up the United Nations family have a rôle to play in the establishment of a NIEO.

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1. Notably illustrated by Theodore Schultz and Edward Denison: the aim was to account for the "unexplained residue" of economic growth by the rising educational level of the working population.
2. Micro-economic analysis has been applied to education viewed as an economic investment, the return on which may be measured by comparing the cost of additional training with the additional wages earned. Gary Becker has produced the fullest theoretical account of "human capital theory", and George Psacharopoulos has presented a synthesis of measurements of "the rates of educational return" conducted in different countries to 1975.

I. EXTRAPOLATION FROM CURRENT TRENDS LEADS TO A DEAD-END

This theme has been examined from two standpoints:

(a) after twenty years of growth, we are now coming up against limitations which will have to be taken into account henceforward;

(b) this growth has given rise to new problems which demand new solutions.

In the educational field too certain limits would appear to have been reached. After having risen much faster than National Product and total public spending in nearly all countries, educational spending seems to have levelled off in the 1970s. Needless to say, these generalizations require moderation; but there can be little doubt as to the overall trend: we cannot expect educational development in the 1980s to come from an increase in the proportion of resources (national or public) devoted to it.

This raises a particularly serious problem in countries that are still a long way off the achievement of universal primary schooling[1] or literacy[2]. Hence the reinforced priority now accorded by the poorest countries (and by Unesco) to the objectives of universal literacy and primary education, within the context of radical reforms, since "traditional" systems offer no viable prospects.

In other countries, the quantitative growth in school attendance at every level is expected to be much slower in the 1980s than in the previous period. But two types of problem are assuming growing importance everywhere: the inadequacy of school systems to social needs and to the needs of the economy. It is the realization of these shortcomings that lies behind the educational reforms upon which nearly all countries have now embarked.

Discussion of these themes is no longer confined to adjustments that might be made to the educational system and to the best way to modernize it. As with discussion of development strategies, attention is now being drawn to dysfunctional aspects of education as well. Such criticisms are now being heard with growing frequency; they are no longer concerned solely with the colonial heritage but also with the rôle of education systems in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities inside each country, and of international inequalities in the context of the division of labour between industrial countries and those of the Third World.

I shall mention here but the chief criticisms: primary schooling often tends to direct young people towards salaried employment in the modern urban sector, whereas only a minority among them can hope to obtain such jobs; general secondary education still channels pupils' aspirations towards higher education; technical and vocational education suffer from lack of prestige, high costs, and are often ill-suited to job market trends; higher education is often perceived as isolated from national life, from the demands of cultural and internal development.

These few examples suffice to illustrate the analogy between critical analyses underlining the quantitative and qualitative shortcomings of present-day economic growth and those that are concerned with current trends in education systems.

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1. More than a third of the developing countries, representing several hundred million school-age children.
2. Unesco estimates the present number of illiterates in the world at 800 million, and expects the figure to reach one billion by the end of the century.

II. EDUCATION AND ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

The call for a NIEO is not confined to the goal of reducing inequalities between countries; the system of international economic relations is also accused of resting upon unfair mechanisms which reinforce and perpetuate these inequalities. What is new about the NIEO is the assertion of the link between the two, distinguishing it from the two "Development Decades" of the 1960s and 1970s. It is also the most controversial aspect, whereas any such discussion ought to be concerned with the search for a basis for minimal agreement upon a world programme. Where principles are concerned, agreement would seem to be possible on the rejection of any universal model of development: the notions of endogenous development, of self-centred development, of self-reliance, all seem to converge upon an objective compatible with the "Charger of the Rights and Duties of States" and the different resolutions adopted by recent international gatherings: the world strategy on Employment approved by the Geneva Conference, the Third World industrialization goals at the Lima Conference, the fostering of exchanges between developing countries at the Buenos Aires Conference, etc.

But can we speak of unfairness in international relations without broaching the topic of inequalities within individual countries? As suggested above, one may take the view that discussion between governments, in the framework of intergovernmental negotiations, ought to be confined to the International Economic Order, and there is no lack of arguments in support of such a view. But when we turn to discussion of ideas, it must be admitted that the problems of national development will inevitably be raised when discussing development on a world scale; this should be all the more obvious when referring to criteria of equity and justice.

Hardly surprisingly, then, many authors have interpreted the mechanisms involved in the reproduction of the international division of labour as being linked with the system of reproduction of economic and social inequalities inside each individual country.

It is not our purpose to discuss these questions here, merely to draw attention to the analogies with certain discussions now taking place over the issue of education policy. There is, at the present time, a growing realization of the rôle played by education systems in the reproduction of inequalities. This is no longer a question, here, as in the previous section, of quantitative insufficiencies of school attendance, nor of qualitative deficiencies (dropout rates, cognitive performance or unsuitability of curricula), delays in equalization of opportunities, or unsuitability to economic and social needs; what concerns us here is the social selection performed by the education system in so far as it contributes to the distribution of social rôles and jobs in a hierarchised society. The hierarchy of school results tends to match the job hierarchy; where expansion of the education system is not matched by changes in the job structure, this situation is perceived as a dysfunction requiring corrective measures.

A great many studies have shown that neither quantitative growth in education nor measures aimed at equalizing educational opportunities were sufficient to bring about equalization of chances in school. It is now therefore agreed that the goals of equity laid down by educational policy can only be made effective if they are an integral part of development policies pursuing this aim through a whole range of diverse and mutually co-ordinated measures. This has led to attempts to devise an integrated development policy, in which the aim of education would be to contribute to the achievement of the social and economic goals of development.

But certain analyses of education's rôle go still further and stress the relations between the alienated and alienating character of imposed education systems, whether inherited or imitated from abroad, with the production and reproduction of social classes in the Third World. Since I. Illich, there has been a growing wave of condemnation of the "Elite International", whose language, conception of development and life-style are closer to those of the ruling circles of the industrial countries than to the situation and culture of their own country[1].

Without becoming further involved in this controversy, we may nevertheless advance the following proposition: a policy of endogenous development designed to accord priority to the struggle against inequality and to the participation of the population in decisions concerning it, ought also to be accompanied by fairly far-reaching educational reforms, redefining the rôle and place of training in the overall system of socio-economic objectives.

Another important aspect of the NIEO is that its definition and implementation are going to require substantial alterations in international relations, and that public opinion is going to have to be prepared in order to understand and reconcile itself to the measures to be taken in this context.

A recent book[2] draws attention to the extent of the consequences for education of the changes in attitude made necessary by a New World Order based on the values of the survival of humanity and respect for the dignity of all cultures. This constitutes a theme for reflection which accords a central rôle to education in the context of a NIEO.

It is hardly to be expected that the reflections and discussions of researchers will in themselves suffice to elaborate these new development strategies and education policies. But still they are necessary if rejection of an exclusive development model is to give way to more intensive discussion of development practices and conceptions. The United Nations institutions could play a major rôle in this sphere.

III. A PRIORITY TASK FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: COMPARISON OF NATIONAL EXPERIENCES

A new International Order can only be devised and implemented by stages, which correspond not only to the different stages in intergovernmental negotiations but also to those of a more deep-seated evolution in people's thinking. United Nations bodies play a by-no-means negligible rôle in shaping world opinion.

I shall mention but the rôle of the United Nations General Assembly and the major intergovernmental conferences as forums for political confrontation and concertation, where the concept of the NIEO has been worked out, approved and deepened.

In an interdisciplinary meeting such as this it is possible to discuss points on which the various technical activities of the International Organizations may be modified in response to new needs, as requested by the May 1975 Resolution of the United Nations. I should like to discuss here the following points, citing in example problems connected with education: statistical information, studies and research, and expert meetings.

1. This view is held in particular by A. Tevoedjré, in "Pauvreté, richesse des nations", by M. Adiseshiah in a communication presented in 1979 to the Seminar on "Education and the New International Economic Order" organized by "National State College" and the International Institute of Educational Planning. It is worth noting that the Seminar's conclusions stress this point.
2. J. W. Botkin, M. El Mandjra, M. Malitza "No limits to learning. Bridging the human gap".

1. Information

The collecting of comparative statistics on the economic and social situation in each country constitues an essential addition to our knowledge of world trends.

In the social sphere, the themes of the NIEO are chiefly concerned with inequalities, and particularly where most deprived groups are involved. Priority objectives can only be translated into concrete measures, both internationally and nationally speaking, if we have at our disposal a minimum of facts with which to delineate the extent of the problem, identify deprived groups, their living conditions and their needs.

In the educational field, considerable progress has been made in the collection of statistics, but these mainly concern children attending school. It now remains for us to find out where the children not attending school are, in order to prepare educational programmes capable of reaching them and answering their needs. In addition, the priority aim of reducing disparities between town and country should lead to the measurement of schooling (and non-formal education) in the countryside, something existing school statistics do not permit.

We may observe still more serious lacunae in statistics on unemployment and underemployment, and on employment in sectors outside salaried employment in the modern sector. A priority effort (a concerted effort on an international scale) in this area is a prerequisite to the implementation of development policies incorporating employment targets. Data on the level of instruction of workers would permit more accurate evaluation of the relations between education and employment.

2. Studies and research

The rejection of an exclusive model of development leads us to take a closer look at national experiences. Thus, in education, we are now much more interested in reforms and innovations introduced in various countries than in working out an ideal model of educational reform or in technological innovations devised in foreign laboratories. Unesco has recently set up regional networks for exchanges on educational innovations[1]; these constitute a mechanism to permit "horizontal" exchanges between countries facing similar problems. To make national experiences communicable and utilizable by other countries, it is necessary to supplement existing information by means of studies and research: it is not enough to know of the existence of a reform, nor even to be able to situate it in its national context, in which it becomes meaningful; one also requires evaluative data in order to understand how it is working and to assess results as well as difficulties encountered. But such studies should not be confined to innovations decided on at national level: greater attention should be paid to "grass roots innovation", which constitutes an experimental field for development models adapted to the specific conditions of the regions or groups from which they spring.

International co-operation can undoubtedly be highly useful in developing such research, either through the funding of these studies or through the provision of methodological support.

But it is above all on national research teams that the job of studying each country's experiences ought to fall. It should be noted that in spite of the fact that all United Nations institutions have as their objective the reinforcement of the Third World's development-research potential, the present

1. APEID network for Asia, NEIDA for Africa, etc.

situation is highly worrying. It would certainly be worthwhile reviewing this situation and its causes, and according it the kind of priority attention now being paid to the strengthening of technical co-operation between developing countries in the framework of the NIEO[1].

3. Expert meetings

The hundreds of expert meetings organized each year by the international organizations represent an essential instrument in promoting consultation and the confrontation of theoretical concepts and experiences relating to development problems.

One important point to bear in mind is the redefinition of the aims of these meetings from the standpoint of a NIEO. Formerly, consensus was sought in the conclusions of such meetings, the aim being to arrive at unanimous recommendations designed to contribute to the elaboration of a unitary theory of development. But a pluralist conception that takes into account the diversity of national experiences and cultures ought to entail changes as to:

(a) the aims of these meetings: it is only from a confrontation of ideas and experiences that certain generalizations can flow, consensus being reached primarily around an outlook based on worldwide solidarity, and a desire to take an open mind view of other cultures and other ways of thinking;

(b) the systematic search for such diversity in the composition of these meetings, rather than for homogeneity among participants;

(c) acknowledgement of a wealth of ways of looking at problems and of research methodologies.

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One essential characteristic of NIEO themes is that they are not a continuation of the thinking and practices of the International Organizations, but that they demand a radical re-examination of ways of thinking and doing things. What meetings such as the one organized by UNITAR should stimulate us to is an exploration of fresh avenues. Only if discussion permits a thoroughgoing and critical examination of the present situation, keeping an open mind as to the new demands made by the NIEO, can these meetings enable us to prepare the concrete changes needed in every sphere in order to contribute to the common objective. The risk to be avoided here would be an attempt to reach a unanimity of view in which change remained verbal only.

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1. Cf. background documents to and recommendations of the Buenos Aires Conference.

SECTION II. EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the last twenty years, the rôle of education in national development has been one of the most discussed topics both in the social sciences and in debate on planning policy, in national and international forums alike. This is something the experts on comparative education gathered here might care to ponder, in this year of 1980, at a time when people are everywhere busy appraising the record of the post-war period and steeling themselves to grapple with the problems of the forthcoming period, which by common agreement is expected to differ greatly from the last three decades.

Any assessment, however, of discussion on the place of education in development must of necessity look beyond the field of comparative education: it is chiefly in the other social sciences that these topics have been studied, and the problems of "educational policy" have above all been aired in political and public debate. As a synthetic field of research, it is the job of comparative education to assimilate all these contributions, including those flowing from the international organizations, which have built up a priceless comparative data base.

I should like to begin by putting to the Congress, as a first subject for reflection, a question concerning the evolution of our thinking on the rôle of education in development. In less than thirty years we have witnessed the birth, the success, and the decline, of the notion that education is one of the chief factors of development. This development has occurred along parallel lines in almost every country from the point of view of national development, and in almost all international gatherings, which have now become one of the principal forums of comparative education, where problems of educational planning are constantly under discussion.

N. B; This paper is the revised version of an inaugural address presented at the 4th World Congress of Comparative Education, Tokyo (July, 1980).

Pedro Rossello, recording "educational trends" from his observation post at the International Bureau of Education, pointed to the novelty and the importance of this convergence some twenty years ago: on every continent, governments had begun to set as their targets schooling for all, undertaking to give absolute priority to educational spending; the development banks undertook to finance the expansion of schooling; economic research showed that post-war growth was chiefly attributable to technological progress, which itself flowed from progress in education.

Educational economics emerged as a new branch of economics, developing a theory of "human capital", in which education was seen as an investment whose returns could be measured in terms of cost-benefit analysis applied to wage structures.

At the same time (although from a standpoint different from, and even opposed to, the foregoing), planners began to draw up forecasts of manpower requirements by occupation and educational qualifications. Most countries took up educational planning as a means of rationalizing growth in schooling. The "planning of the development of human resources" was gradually worked out and incorporated into a global development strategy aimed simultaneously at education, employment and the economy.

Simultaneously, we find a period of unprecedented school enrolments at all levels and in educational spending, in every country.

In the field of education proper, there grew up a flow of innovations and reforms - in content, methods and structures - which spread rapidly on an international scale. Now, what was the driving force behind this convergence of theories, practices and facts? When we examine it from an international standpoint, are we dealing with parallel situations and national development strategies (with the same causes producing the same effects at the same moment), or with the effects of imitation, linkage or influence?

Last year, at Valencia, the Congress of the European Society of Comparative Education discussed the influence of the international organizations in national educational policy-making processes.

Mention may be made here of Unesco's rôle in the making of educational policy in the Third World, and that of the OECD in reforming the educational systems in Europe, especially through the generalization of the comprehensive middle school. But it is also worth asking who influences the international organizations. At the World Congress held in London, in 1977, some people drew attention to the fact that every kind of international aid tended to propagate a single model of education, together with a single model of economic and social development.

These questions would have had a very different meaning ten years ago or so, for in the intervening years the certainties - or perhaps the illusions - of the period of post-war growth have come under attack.

Present-day criticism of the model of limitless exponential quantitative growth is aimed at every sector of the economy and society in every country. And it is in this general context that we need to see the current re-examination of the rôle of education in development. The ruling ideas have changed so quickly, and so fundamentally, that we could draw up a list symmetrical to the one for the preceding period.

Today, people focus on the negative impact of education upon economic and social development. The attack is being mounted simultaneously all along the front.

To begin with, doubt is cast upon the impact of the expansion of schooling on economic growth.

In the earlier period, attention was drawn to the connection between levels of educational and economic development; what is compared today is the rate of educational expansion (school enrolments or educational expenditure) with economic growth rates, which reveal no significant relations.

People go further still, condemning the shortcomings and the negative consequences of the growth of schooling in the Third World, in the name of efficiency as well as in the name of fairness. In spite of the goal of universal primary education, priority has in fact (as measured by the allocation of financial resources, or by pupil and student enrolment growth rates) been given to secondary and higher education, to the detriment of elementary education, especially in the countryside.

What is more, very rapid growth in secondary education has outrun employment opportunities in the modern sector of the economy. The expansion of universities has added graduate unemployment to the general deterioration of employment opportunities, instead of providing hoped-for solutions to the need for skilled managers.

After justifying the priority given to education on the grounds of the demands of economic development, a relation of cause and effect is now established between the spread of schooling in the countryside and the unchecked rural exodus, between the expansion of higher education and graduate emigration.

Much had been hoped for from the development of technical education, and from vocational or pre-vocational training; but the young are not very attracted to these sectors, which they regard as a second choice, behind long-cycle academic-type courses, which have kept their prestige; even employers themselves criticize these expensive technical training courses, claiming that they are ill-suited to the real needs of industry. Sociologists, for their part, point to the persistence of social inequalities in spite of quantitative growth in school systems at all levels. Durkheims's theory of the function of "social reproduction" performed by educational systems is now interpreted as a fundamental critique according to which education, far from being a factor of social mobility and greater democracy, actually serves to preserve, and even to aggravate social inequality.

As for those who give priority to the Third World countries' quest for cultural identity, they condemn the alienation produced by educational models that are either inherited from or imitations of those of the dominant industrial countries; the universities are accused of creating new "privileged minorities" and an élite "international", while the massive failure of schooling unsuited to national conditions contributes to resignation in the face of social inequalities and to an international division of labour dominated by the industrial nations.

In the industrial nations themselves, the economic crisis has helped to speed up the change in thinking on the rôle of education in development. Disorders in the universities, unemployment among technical and post-secondary graduates, relative or absolute cuts in educational spending, all have combined to engender convergent criticisms of the general lengthening of studies, which in the previous period had been regarded as the decisive factor of economic and social progress.

It would be easy to continue to list themes that have supplanted those of the previous period. Nor would we have much difficulty pointing out their exaggerations and their contradictions. To this cross-fire of criticism pouring out of every sector of the economy, the social sciences and public opinion (conservative as well as progressive), educators seek to reply (or to take evasive action) by stressing that it is pointless to expect progress (or reforms) in education to put an end to social inequality or solve employment problems singlehanded.

But before quarrelling with what they perceive as attacks, researchers would do well to examine their own motives, for it is their professional duty to seek to avoid confusion between their personal preferences and their concern for scientific objectivity. I am concerned here with comparative education as a field of study: are we educators, here to defend education against all-comers, or social scientists concerned above all to understand the phenomena before us, even were our research to lead us to formulate working hypotheses or conclusions that conflicted with our convictions or preferences?

I personally should like to borrow here the notion of "implication" familiar to psychoanalysts and the theoreticians of non-directive learning methods.

As specialists in comparative education, we are "implicated" in the educational systems we have elected to study. We are not merely part of (and actors in) this system, identifying with its system of values, we also have our own professional and personal interest in it, which, like any social or professional group, we are inclined to defend in the name of the general interest; in addition, we enjoy a relative advantage in that we can defend these interests with the scientific language and the easy conscience that comes from belonging to a "higher system", whose social function is to develop the individual, his mind, his consciousness. More than in the other social sciences, there is a big risk of seeking (successfully) to demonstrate what we wish to prove (and have an interest in so doing).

Is it possible to achieve the kind of scientific objectivity that would place comparative education "above the fray", by applying the hypothetico-deductive approach, as proposed by Karl Popper and our colleagues Brian Holmes and Harold Noah? I personally prefer a relativist position: the social scientist cannot avoid being implicated in the society he is studying, and to which he also belongs, as citizen and worker. It is only through awareness of his implication, and by making

this explicit, that he can hope to minimize the risk of confusing his scientific approach with the value system of the society to which he belongs, or with defense of the interests of his professional category.

Among the different social sub-systems, we cannot, in studying the educational system, ignore its normative function, since its purpose is to act upon individuals and the generations, to instruct them, inculcate values, attitudes and behaviour deemed desirable: this is where value judgments come in.

The same considerations apply to the notion of "development", which is also normative: it is a manner of acting upon society with the explicit intention of modifying its evolution, which presupposes a series of value judgments as to what constitutes a desirable future.

These epistemological questions are not irrelevant, for they are essential in helping us to clarify the nature of relations between the educational sub-system and its environment. The variations in time and space which the analyses of comparative education may help us to understand better that education is neither an isolated system, nor a mere cog in a machine, linked to other social sub-systems by one-track functions reducible to mathematical parameters or one-sided theories. When educators (theoreticians or practitioners) restrict themselves to defining education as existing solely for the purpose of developing each individual to the utmost of his or her potential, express thereby a vision as partial and fragmentary as the economists when they reduce education to its economic dimension or as the sociologists who see it purely in terms of the rôle it plays in social stratification. Developing the individual, preparing him to play his rôle as citizen, or producer, or consumer, all these are dimensions of a complex system, whose manifold functions are rarely explicit, and partly contradictory; what is more, the educational system has a dynamic of its own, and some freedom for manoeuvre vis-à-vis other social sub-systems. Any one-dimensional system will fail to take into consideration these contradictory facets; this criticism can be levelled at the different theories mentioned above, in whose view (a) education is the factor that produces economic growth or (b) a system whose purpose is to serve the development of the individual, or (c) the sole means of achieving greater democracy, or, on the contrary, (d) the mechanism whereby social inequalities are reproduced, or again (e) a bureaucratic system like any other bureaucratic system. A characteristic feature of these theories is that they observe facts in order to demonstrate their hypotheses, while avoiding formulating propositions capable of being refuted. In this they are ideological rather than scientific. Comparative education, which analyses variations in educational systems in space and time, has the advantage of being able to test and refute such one-sided systems of explanation. In particular, we can shed light on the rapid evolution of thinking about the relation between education and development by observing the concomitant developments in facts and educational policies. It was at the end of the period of growth in the 50s and 60s that those development models and theories which gave to planning its legitimacy as an instrument of scientifico-technical rationalism began to come under attack. At the beginning of this period, the expansion of schooling, of the economy and of employment in the modern sector went hand-in-hand; this gave rise to functionalist interpretations based on relations of cause and effect, which appeared to be borne out scientifically by the correlations observed between the three sub-systems. But differences in pace, and the partly

autonomous development of each of the three systems gradually gave rise to irregularities and tensions, which in turn produced diametrically opposed interpretations; these were no more scientifically valid than the ones they replaced, but their legitimacy lies in the scientific language in which they are couched, and in their quasi-experimental approach. What lies behind this radical change in conceptions of the relations between education and development is not, I believe, an Hegelian dialectic of ideas, but the leads and lags in the respective evolutions of the economic and the educational sub-systems.

Before concluding this brief historical review, I should like to reflect for a moment on future relations between education and development, at a time when every country, and all the international organizations are seeking to devise new development strategies for the 80s and the year 2000.

Specialists in comparative education cannot claim to have solutions to the normative problems over which the experts, governments and public opinion are now divided. But they can, as educators, contribute to this great debate by examining the rôle that education might play in preparing young minds, and those of adults to grasp the common problems of interdependence and survival now facing humanity, and to play their part in the transformations needed.

OCCASIONAL PAPER No. 55: This paper is in two parts: the first part is devoted to a discussion of the rôle of education in a New International Economic Order and it is argued that rather than demanding a perfect match between social and economic order, educational issues should be critically re-examined as is now being done with economic development strategies; in the second part the author reviews the recent performance of education in influencing the national development and discusses the nature of the relations between the educational sub-system and its social and economic environment.

THE AUTHOR is an economist whose main field of research is educational manpower planning in the Third World. He is presently the Director of the IIEP.